

on the battlefield, and then bringing that back into the community and deploying those tactics on the streets in our neighborhoods.

This is a serious problem. It is documented. The FBI has a report. This is a problem that we need to get ahead of and stop before we have more serious problems than we do already.

I thank the chairman and ranking member for accepting this amendment.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. MITCHELL).

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Chairman, I rise today in support of an amendment that will help improve the transfer of medical records from the Department of Defense to the Veterans Administration upon discharge.

This amendment will help ensure that when a soldier, sailor, airman, or marine voluntarily authorizes the transfer of his or her medical information to the VA, the information will, in fact, be transferred.

I want to thank Chairman SKELTON for supporting this amendment. His dedication to our fighting men and women is legendary, and our Nation's veterans are lucky to have him on their side.

I also want to thank Representatives ZACH SPACE, TIM WALZ, and CIRO RODRIGUEZ. I am proud to serve with them on the Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. They have been full partners in this endeavor, and as the chairman of our subcommittee, I am honored by their support.

And, finally, I want to thank Chairman FILNER. His leadership has been invaluable, and I am grateful for his help.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Chairman, I would like to thank the chairman and ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee for their hard work on this important legislation that will help provide our military with the resources they need to successfully execute their mission.

I have a very simple amendment today expressing the sense of Congress that the Arlington National Cemetery shall provide a site for a memorial marker to honor the lives of United States Armed Forces members who died in an air crash at Bakers Creek, Australia, on June 14, 1943. The amendment provides that the Secretary of the Army shall have the exclusive authority over the design of the memorial and the selection of the site.

This little-known tragedy occurred during World War II, a conflict that was fought and won by what has been called America's Greatest Generation. Unfortunately, the men who died in the Bakers Creek crash were never recognized as belonging to that group of great American heroes. During their service in the South Pacific, they were on a routine flight from Australia, re-

turning from a week's leave for R&R. The plane crashed in Bakers Creek, Australia. Unfortunately, due to orders to keep the Allied presence in Australia a secret, the crash was kept a secret by the military.

Thankfully, many of the families, some of whom live in my district, now know the true story of how their relatives died. My amendment would merely recognize their sacrifice by honoring their service with a memorial marker at Arlington National Cemetery.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Chairman, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. CAPITO. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Chairman, I just want to say that we on this side are in total agreement with her amendment. We thank her for bringing it in such a thoughtful way and we support it.

Madam Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Chairman, I yield 1 minute to my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ).

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Chairman, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their outstanding work on this incredibly important piece of legislation.

I offer a simple amendment, and I rise in support, encouraging my colleagues to support the amendment.

After spending 24 years in the Army National Guard, I know that members of our Armed Forces don't join the military simply for the benefits that are there. But I also know that benefits can help improve retention and aid servicemembers when they return to civilian life.

One benefit that has given our servicemembers a problem over the years is the Federal Tuition Assistance program. This program is based on a first-come, first-serve benefit. Servicemembers join up thinking this is a guaranteed benefit only to find out that the funding has run out. While serving in the National Guard and now as a Member of Congress, I have heard numerous complaints weekly about this program.

My amendment would direct DOD to report relevant information on this program by telling us how many servicemembers are eligible for this and how many receive the benefit. The study would examine the program's effect on retention as well as how it interacts with State tuition assistance programs.

We owe our servicemembers the benefits they are promised. This amendment would give us the necessary information to improve the program, to maximize the use of our dollars, and get it directed at our soldiers who need it.

I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, I just want to say, we appreciate the gentleman and his amendment on this side and thank him for bringing it to the floor.

Mr. Chairman, at this point, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER).

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Chairman SKELTON and Ranking Member HUNTER for including my amendment in this package.

My amendment provides certainty to servicemembers deployed in a contingency operation that their child custody arrangements will be protected.

In some cases, courts are overturning established custody arrangements while the custodial parent is serving our country in a contingency operation, such as Iraq or Afghanistan.

States have become aware of this issue and are looking at what action they can take to support our men and women in uniform. The State of Michigan passed a law in 2005 to provide these protections to military personnel. The amendment offered today is modeled after the established Michigan law.

Much is asked of our servicemembers, and mobilizations can disrupt and strain relationships at home. This additional protection is needed to provide them peace of mind that the courts will not take away their children because they answered the country's call to serve. This amendment protects them and it protects their children.

Again, I thank Chairman SKELTON and Ranking Member HUNTER for supporting this important amendment.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TURNER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank the gentleman. What an essential and important amendment this is.

We recognized and have embedded in law the remedies for a service person who may be overseas and may lose his house or may have a judgment taken against him, a civil law liability judgment, and we have tried to protect him from that. And the idea of having a child taken from you while you are serving overseas can only have a demoralizing effect on members of the armed services.

So this protection is very much needed, and I thank the gentleman from Ohio. We have total support on this side for his amendment.

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I thank Mr. HUNTER and I want to thank Chairman SKELTON again for this important amendment that will provide peace of mind for those who are serving.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, at this time, I would like to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) for the purposes of a colloquy with myself and Mr. SKELTON.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Chairman, I thank Mr. HUNTER and Chairman SKELTON.

I am deeply concerned about the unintended consequences that section 703 may have on the price of drugs for America's veterans. I rise today and